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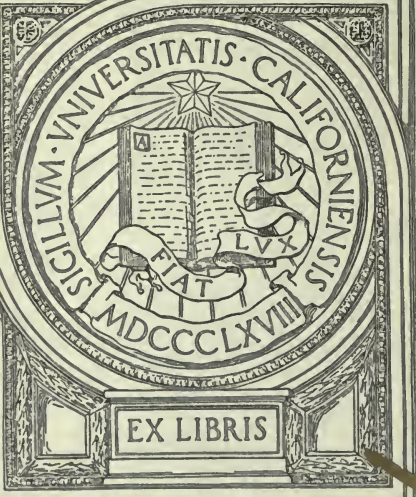

Winfield Manor.

HISTORICAL SKETCH,

BY

WILFRED EDMUNDS, F.R.H.S.,

Vice-President of the Scarsdale Field Naturalists' and Archæological Society.

CHESTERFIELD : W. EDMUNDS, *Derbyshire Times* Office.
DERBY : BEMROSE & SON.
1885.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

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SOUTH VIEW OF WINFIELD MANOR HOUSE.

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PREFACE.

The following paper was read to the members of the Scarsdale Field Naturalists' and Archæological Society in the grounds of the ruins which the author attempted to describe.

At the request of many friends it has been printed, and I now submit it to the judgment of the public.

W. E.

Chesterfield, 1885.

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WINFIELD MANOR.

ACCORDING to the Domesday survey, the estate upon which these ruins stand was called *Winefeld* and *Winnefelt*, and some persons have considered that the name thus written indicated a vineyard. Apart from the fact that in this part of England vines could not be successfully cultivated in the open air, I think the name as first given was merely an instance of the careless spelling of those days, which is indeed proved by the fact that the word is spelt in two ways in this single document. Another interpretation suggests that the origin of the name is *Guin-field* or water meadow, which has some countenance in the fact that the valley near the church is frequently flooded. But I think a far better etymology is to be found in that favoured by Blore, by which we trace the name to "win" or "whin," an ancient name for the *Genista spinoza*, the gorse or furze. A striking confirmation of this reading is found in two other local names, one on each side of this place, viz., Bracken-field to the N.W., from the profusion of bracken or fern (the *Pteris aquilina*), and Carnfield, S.E., on the other side of this place, the cornfield. Whatever be the origin of the name, however, we find that at the Conquest the place came into the possession of William Peverel, a son of the Norman conqueror, to whom he gave a great part

of this shire, and whose castle still remains his monument at Castleton in this county. What became of Roger de Poictou, the former owner of Winfield, we know not, but in those days there was only one law—that tof might. From William Peverel it passed to the Heriz family, and on the death of Sir John de Heriz, Roger Bellars, lord of the neighbouring manor of Crich obtained it, and it remained in the possession of this family for many generations. In the reign of Henry the 6th, Ralph, Lord Cromwell, claimed it, and fought a lawsuit with Sir Henry Pierrepont. The suit was compromised by Cromwell getting Winfield, whilst his adversary obtained Tibshelf and two Nottinghamshire manors. Up to this period, if there was any house here it was one of no importance, but when Lord Cromwell got the estate, he set to work to build the present finely designed mansion. At the same time he restored and enlarged the church, as described by my friend Mr. Cox in his history of the *Churches of Derbyshire*. The building whose ruins you now see was probably commenced in 1441, and there is a singular proof that this house was designed and commenced by Cromwell in the fact that in the coat of arms carved in stone over the gateway, you will see a number of bags or purses, alluding to Cromwell's office as Treasurer of the Exchequer. Similar carving is to be found on another mansion of Cromwell's at Coly Weston in Northamptonshire. Cromwell, however, did not finish this mansion, as he sold it to John Talbot, second Earl of Shrewsbury, amongst whose papers are records of numerous payments for the building of this Hall. For the following description of the building I am indebted to Mr. J. D. Leader's book, "Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity":—

"The building of the mansion formed two courts, an inner and

an outer one; the first lying to the south and the other to the north. The entrance to the outer court was on the east side by an arched gateway, to the left of which stands the castle barn, and to the right, the "barrack," a long barn like building, which probably acquired its present name during the Civil Wars, when Winfield stood a siege. Around the west and south sides of this court were stables, outbuildings, and servants' quarters; and from the west there may perhaps, have been a postern or sally post. Outside, where the ground does not fall rapidly from the walls, traces of earthwork still remain, and the field in which they are, retains the name of the bulwarks.'

Between the outward, or south court, and the inward or north court, there is a second gateway, with porter's lodge, and all the arrangements for careful watching; and round the north quadrangle stood the chief rooms of the mansion.

Opposite the visitor as he passes through the gateway, stands the porch leading to the great hall and the state apartments. To the westward stands the massive tower of the keep, with dungeon cells in its thick walls; and running from this tower along the west side of the court are the foundations of a range of buildings, in which according to tradition, were the apartments of the Queen of Scots. Nothing now remains of them but the outer wall and the inner foundations, but some idea of the character of the accommodation may still be formed. The numerous narrow windows, the fireplaces, and the many angles, all point to a series of small rooms; and if there were any larger rooms they must have fronted to the court, a position that made them not only safe from hostile attack, but in the case of the Queen of Scots, diminished the chance of escape.

On the north side of the court are the chief remains of the mansion. Passing through a porch, we reach the great hall, 72 feet 4 inches long by 36 feet 5 inches wide, having a richly decorated bay window, and three flat windows on the south side, and five windows on the north, the mullions and tracery of which have been

cut away. The dais stood at the east end of the room, and when the noble owners sat at their raised table and the crowd of retainers filled the hall, the scene must have been a brilliant and busy one. Tapestry adorned the walls, as we may judge from the staples that still remain; and over the Earl's chair was emblazoned his coat of arms, with its many quarterings.

To the left of the porch lay the buttery, the buttery hatch and the kitchens. Of the latter the huge fire-places and ovens still remain, to bear convincing testimony to the good cheer in which the household indulged. Reached by a flight of stairs was the saloon or ball room, lighted by a large decorated window in its south end, and from it, were accessible a suite of bedrooms, over the buttery and kitchens, extending to the western boundary of the building.

Beneath the great hall, and of the same dimensions, was a crypt, which still remains. Two rows of octagon pillars support groined arches massively ribbed. The vaulted roof is filled in with rag stone and has been covered with plaster, which time has caused to fall away. Small windows in the north side afford scanty light to this rich, but somewhat gloomy apartment. In its east end was a door leading to the garden, while a passage from the west end led direct to the kitchen. About the use of this crypt there has been much controversy, and when we look at the excellence of its finish, and note that it is by no means an underground cellar, we might be tempted to conclude that it was a servants' hall. But remembering the habits of the time, how the Lord and his attendant was wont to take their meals together, divided only by the salt, we hesitate to accept that theory. Possibly it may have been the chapel, for traces of which archæologists have sought in vain."

I can hardly agree with Mr. Leader here. I think a chapel would have been in a more prominent position, and above ground. He continues:

"The east side of the north court does not appear to have been

occupied with buildings, but was protected by a wall. The garden of the mansion lays to the north, divided from the park by a sunk fence and a dry ditch."

Winfield remained in the possession of the Earls of Shrewsbury until 1616, when on the decease of Gilbert, the seventh earl, it became the property of the husbands of his three daughters, namely the Earl of Kent, the Earl of Pembroke, and the Earl of Arundel and Surrey. It, however, appears to have passed into the hands of the Earl of Pembroke by some family arrangement, as we find that he placed it in a state of defence at the outbreak of the civil war between Charles the First and the Parliament. Pembroke sided with the latter, and the Manor was garrisoned by the Roundheads. In December, 1643, William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, came down on the place with a small army of Royalists, and on the 7th of that month they laid siege to it, and took it by storm four days after; but it is a singular comment upon the daring gallantry of the combatants in those days, that in the midst of their success, Colonel Gell with a flying column swooped down on the royal forces in Winfield town, and took two troops of them prisoners with their colours (two captains and 40 men in all), and carried them off before the Earl of Newcastle could come to their aid. The Earl soon afterwards withdrew his army, leaving a garrison in Winfield although the Parliamentarians were engaged in raising a force to reconquer the Manor. We are told by a contemporary historian that "as soon as the body of Newcastle's fforces were gone, Colonell Millward with his regiment saddled themselves on this side Bakewell. Colonell Eyre att Chatsworth and att his own house in the Peak; Colonell FitsHerbert att South Winfield and Tissington: Colonel Fretyvisle at his owne house and

Scarsdale," and so on, by which it is clear that the Earl of Newcastle's success stirred up the whole county. The garrison of Winfield, however, continued to make raids and sorties, and in consequence in the following year Colonel Gell sent to Nottingham for "assistance to beleaguer Winfield Manor, because it was as great an annoyance to Nottinghamshire as to Derbyshire." Accordingly the place was environed and the siege commenced. In about ten days Colonel Gell had to send away a part of his force to disperse the Royalists, who were gathering from Lichfield and Tutbury at Burton with intent to relieve Winfield. Major Sandars was deputed to this duty, and hearing that "Colonel Eyre his regiment lay in Boylstone Church," to quote the historian, "our dragoones dismounted and surprised the whole regiment in the church and soe tooke men, arms, colours, and all without the loss of one man on either side." The victorious Roundheads then left a guard over their prisoners in the church, and attacked the remaining parties of Royalists in detail, and drove them away, "and soe our men returned to the leaguer at Wingfeild Manor againe." The siege however had made but very little progress. Colonel Roger Molineux, who was first in charge of the garrison of 220 men, had been succeeded by Colonel Dalby, whilst Lord Grey, of Groby, had aided Sir John Gell in the attack. The siege must have lasted months in all, for besides the attempt at raising it, mentioned already, in August King Charles sent General Hastings with a force to aid the garrison, but he was defeated by the Earl of Denbigh and Sir Jno. Gell. At one time the garrison suffered much from want of water, as the besiegers cut off the pipes which gave supply to the Manor. They sank a deep well, however, in the courtyard, and so got over that

deprivation. The cannon of the besieged was superior to that of the attacking force, and we are told that "Colonell Gell finding that his ordinance would do noe good against the Mannor and understanding that Major-General Craford had foure great peeces, sent two of his officers unto him to desire him to send him them for three or four days for battering; and in soe doinge hee would doe the countrey good service, because it was a place that could not bee otherwise taken without they were pined out." "Pined" is an old word for starvation from lack of food. Major General Craford at once agreed, and came himself with his large guns and a force of infantry. The heavy guns were first placed on Pentrich Common, and an outlying battery on that side was taken, but it was found impossible to breach the walls at that distance. The cannon were then taken to the west side (opposite) and placed in a wood, and after three hours' fire a large breach was opened, and the garrison surrendered. Pilkington, who wrote in 1789, says that he saw the breach by which the assailants entered, and several of the cannon balls which were employed, one weighing 32lbs.—heavy shot for those days. The garrison was spared, but Colonel Dalby, the Governor, who had disguised himself as a common soldier, was shot dead by a deserter, who recognised him. The traitorous villain put his musket through a small hole in the wall near the porter's lodge, and shot his Colonel in the face, killing him on the spot. So much for the fighting days of Winfield. In 1646, by a decree of Parliament dated the 23rd of June, the place was dismantled and reduced to ruin, the Roundheads announcing their determination to destroy every place which might serve as a "nest for malignants." After dismantling Winfield they went to Ashover, and destroyed Eastwood

Hall. They also defaced and damaged the church there, and burnt some valuable old books and documents in the Market Place as "Popery and witchcraft," and then singing a psalm they got on their horses and rode away.

Winfield after this passed into the hands of the ancestors of the present family of Halton, who (the latter) deserve our thanks for preserving a ruin of such interest. I regret that although this care has been taken of late, one of their predecessors was not so considerate, as a large part of the mansion in the valley below is built of stone taken hence in 1774. Much that was of priceless value to the antiquary was then destroyed. It is remarkable, however, that although the house has not been inhabited as a whole since the Civil War, the windows remained glazed until 1785.

And now, I may say just a word upon a subject which is inseparably connected with Winfield Manor. It is impossible to gaze on these ruined walls without remembering that they are associated with one of the most romantic characters of history. Whatever may be the ultimate judgment of the world on Mary, Queen of Scots, it is impossible not to feel a deep interest in her extraordinary life, and a touch of sorrow at her many sufferings, and her untimely and cruel death. She forms to my mind one of the most pathetic pictures of the past, and when you remember her story, and gaze on these ruins, you can readily fancy how like a caged bird she beat herself against her prison wall, and how impatiently she would pace these terraces, and how her favourite look-out in yonder tower must have been the scene of those passionate yearnings for liberty, which we who have never been imprisoned can never thoroughly understand. Some

lines written by Samuel Roberts, of Sheffield, in his 80th year, well describe this :

> "Alone here oft may Scotia's beauteous Queen,
> Through tears, have gazed upon the lovely scene ;
> Victim of villany, of women's hate,
> Of fiery zeal, of wiles, and storms of state,
> Torn from her throne, her country, and her child,
> And cast an exiled monarch on this wild."

Who can wonder if she aided Leonard Dacre in his plot for her escape in 1569 ? Who can be surprised that a high-souled gentleman like Anthony Babington, should be fired with anger and pity as he saw her tortured daily by Bess of Hardwick's bitter tongue, and Queen Elizabeth's cruel suspicions. Alas for both ! Anthony Babington, whose family reared that graceful spire which forms so beautiful an object in the Ashover valley, was ruthlessly executed in Lincoln Inn Fields, on September 20th, 1586, in spite of all appeals, and his conspiracy was made the excuse of the judicial murder of Mary. It is only fair to Elizabeth to say that she did not intend the execution, that she was not satisfied of the guilt of Mary, as her would-be assassin, and that she actually imprisoned her Secretary for deceiving her as to sending out the death warrant. Mary's nineteen years of captivity ended in the tragedy of Fotheringhay, and we can well understand that she welcomed death, and that although but 45 years old, she was "grey, and looked like seventy," as is recorded by one who saw her. Shrewsbury appears to have been as kind a custodian as he could be, but he had a jealous, hard queen on one side, and a shrew wife on the other, and if he did Mary any wrong in his capacity as gaoler, he suffered enough for it at the hands of the two Elizabeths. For 16 years he was compelled to be Mary's

gaoler, and never had an hour's peace in the thankless office. Of that period Mary spent a great part here, and at Sheffield Castle, with occasional visits to Chatsworth, Buxton, Tutbury, and Worksop. I do not think she ever resided at Hardwick, though they have many relics of her there. Certainly she never was in the present Hardwick Hall, as it was not built then, but she may have been in the old Hall. I may remark that it has been pointed out as a curious circumstance, that not one single house remains standing in its entirety, which was used by the unfortunate Queen in her captivity. An historical work by Bagshawe, published in 1846, states that part of the bedstead on which Mary slept in this Hall, was then in the possession of Mr. Joseph Cupit, of the Horse and Groom Inn, Winfield. Perhaps it may be well in speaking of Mary's captivity to point out that her retinue was considerable, and it required a large building like this to accommodate the captive Queen's attendants, and the necessary guard. A curious state paper written by Sir Ralph Sadler, who succeeded Shrewsbury as Mary's custodian, says that in November, 1584, there were in all 210 gentlemen, yeomen, officers, and soldiers employed in the custody of the Queen in Winfield. Sir Ralph also says that it would require 150 men to guard the Queen at Tutbury, as 15 or 16 must watch nightly. The domestic establishment of the Queen at Winfield is said to have consisted of "5 gentilmen, 14 servitours, 3 cooks, 4 boyes, 3 gentilmen's men, 6 gentilwomen, 2 wyves, 10 wenches, and children." The diet of the Queen on "both fishe days and fleshe days" was "about 16 dishes dressed after their own manner, sometimes more or less as provision serveth." The Queen had four good coach horses, and her gentlemen six, and about 40 horses were kept altogether. The same

document states that the Queen had no "napery, hangings, bed linen," &c., of her own, but had to be provided by Lord Shrewsbury, that which had been sent by Elizabeth's order being declared to be "nothing of it serviceable, but worn and spent." In the same paper replies are given as to the price of provisions at Winfield at this time, and we learn that wheat was 20s. a quarter, malt 16s. a quarter, a good ox £4, mutton a score £7, veal and other meats reasonable good charge about 8s.; hay, 13s. 4d. a load; oats, 8s. a quarter; peas, about 12s. the quarter. The Queen and her suite drank ten tuns of wine a year—this would probably be claret or burgundy, which was much drunk in England in those and earlier days; perhaps owing to the fact that for about two centuries we possessed a great part of France.

I now conclude these notes with the hope that they may have given you a few facts of interest, and that you may find them of some little use in your inspection of these most picturesque ruins. They are indelibly associated with episodes of great moment in the history of our country, and believing as I do that in the teaching of the past may be found valuable lessons for the present, I have no doubt that those who are willing to add to their store of knowledge, may spend a useful and pleasant hour amongst these relics of a people of like hopes and fears, and similar passions to ourselves, who have had their hour on life's stage hundreds of years ago, and who now rest in the bosom of mother Earth, leaving us only a memory—only a tradition,

"To point a moral or adorn a tale."

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